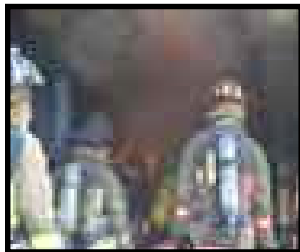




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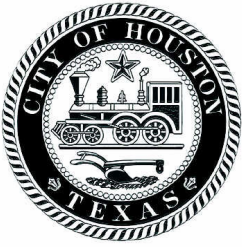
STRATEGIC PLAN

Fiscal Years 2006-2011

HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Bill White, Mayor

Phil Boriskie, Fire Chief



CITY OF HOUSTON

Office of the Mayor

Bill White

Mayor

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I want to commend the leadership of the Houston Fire Department for their commitment and effort in developing the HFD Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2006-2011. Leadership and vision are crucial to the success of any organization. With this plan in place, it will be possible for the department to chart its future and address many of the issues raised over the years in a comprehensive and collaborative fashion. I have great optimism that the Houston Fire Department will be successful in this endeavor.

There are many challenges facing each of us in the years to come. The citizens expect a polite, courteous, and very professional response from its public servants. With a clear vision and strong leadership from all levels of the Houston Fire Department and other City staff, we will meet these challenges with great success.

I want to thank the entire department for its dedication and effort in this planning process and for the outstanding services it provides our community.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill White". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill White
Mayor



CITY OF HOUSTON

Fire Department

Bill White

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It gives me great pleasure to present the Houston Fire Department's Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2006-2011. Months of effort and input from all commands of the department have resulted in a document that lays a clear path to guide the Houston Fire Department into the next decade.

The plan is centered around seven key goal areas: health and safety, prevention, emergency response, management and leadership, diversity, capital assets, and public perception. Within the plan are short-term and long-term objectives that will enable the department to reinforce the goals of the Houston Fire Department. The objectives are further supported by the intended plans of action.

It is imperative that we as individuals and as an organization have a clear vision of what we want the Houston Fire Department to look like in the years to come. It is also important to have solid plans to guide us to that end.

I thank all of our members who helped create this document and hope the Strategic Plan will better inform our members and the public we serve about the challenges we face and the initiatives that the HFD will undertake to better prepare us for the future.

This FY 2006-2011 Strategic Plan will allow the Houston Fire Department to safely, effectively, and efficiently progress into the future. After all, it is the vision of the Houston Fire Department to provide a superior emergency service organization, which continually improves the quality of service delivered to our customers, the citizens of Houston.

Phil Boriskie
Fire Chief



HFD MISSION STATEMENT

The Houston Fire Department is a professional organization continually seeking opportunities to serve our community through fire prevention, emergency operations, patient care, and excellent customer service.

HFD VISION STATEMENT

We are committed to a superior emergency service organization, which continually improves the quality of service delivered to our customers, the citizens of Houston.

HFD SLOGAN

Seeking Opportunities to Serve

CORE VALUES OF THE DEPARTMENT

SAFETY

The preservation of life remains the number one goal of the HFD beginning with the Responder and extending to the public.

VALOR

Courageously encountering adversity, accepting responsibility for ones actions, and providing respectful and professional conduct due the public and our members.

INTEGRITY

Always doing what is right even when it's difficult or unpopular so that what we do individually and as an organization will stand up to public scrutiny.

EXCELLENCE

Striving for constant improvement to better serve the community and each other.

DEDICATION

Wholly committed to the mission and vision of our department. The faithful observance of duty beckons us to fulfill our obligations professionally and honestly.



HFD SCOPE OF SERVICE

The service provided by the Houston Fire Department has evolved over the years from a heavy emphasis on fighting structure fires to a more prominent role in providing pre-hospital care. In light of the events leading up to and including the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the HFD has expanded its role in responding to all types of emergencies, such as hazardous materials incidents, technical rescue events, transportation accidents, utility-related incidents and acts of terrorism. The public demands and expects a courteous and professional response to all types of emergencies and requests for service.

The Houston Fire Department responsibilities includes:

- **Fires – structural and non-structural**
Traditional structural firefighting, vehicle fires, wild land fires, and rescue related to these events.
- **Emergency Medical Services**
The bulk of the demand for services continues to increase in the area of pre-hospital care provided by the Houston Fire Department. The HFD now provides a complete package of Emergency Medical Services, mass casualty management, decontamination, and patient transport.
- **Terrorist Acts – Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives**
Issues arising from the recent rise in global terrorism necessitates that HFD personnel have the ability to respond to, and mitigate all acts of terrorism, both domestic and international. The Houston Fire Department has increased its readiness through aggressive planning, training and equipment acquisition.
- **Hazardous Materials Response**
The City of Houston has long been recognized as the “Chemical Capital of the World.” Consequently, the HFD Hazardous Materials Response Team has become a model for fire services around the world. The department continues to expand the capabilities of the HMRT to meet the ever increasing demand for response to chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives events.
- **Technical Rescue**
The Technical Rescue Team provides emergency response to incidents such as structural collapse, swift and rapid-rising water, trench rescue, confined space rescue, high angle emergencies, and vehicle extrication.
- **Transportation Incidents – land, air, water, and rail**
The Houston Fire Department responds to emergencies involving all modes of transportation. It works closely with the Port Authority of Houston and the US Coast Guard to provide response to water related incidents. The HFD maintains and provides the Air Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) capability for both of Houston’s major airports – Bush Intercontinental and Hobby.



- **Catastrophic Weather Events – hurricanes, tornadoes, storms, floods and heat**
Hurricanes, thunderstorms and the associated flooding and tornadoes pose an immediate danger to the citizens of this community. The HFD plays a vital role in protecting life and property from the consequences of weather related emergencies.
- **Fire Prevention – inspection, education, enforcement, and code development**
Traditional fire prevention activities, such as inspection and enforcement continue to play a prominent role in protecting the community from fire related losses – life, property, and environment. A greater emphasis on public education and pro-active code development will be sought.
- **Fire Investigation – arson, cause/origin, intelligence, prosecution**
The HFD Arson Division has a long-standing reputation for its efficiency in fire cause and determination. Working jointly with other police agencies and the ATF to bring arsonists to conviction brings to bear an added element of fire prevention. Interaction with other enforcement agencies allows for collective intelligence sharing and enhances safety to our community.
- **Special Event and Dignitary Protection**
Houston is home to past President George H. Bush and more than 46 foreign consulates. The HFD provides planning and response to many special events and dignitary visits. With the added threat of terrorism, special event planning and response takes on a whole new dimension and are no longer routine.

**HFD KEY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The Houston Fire Department has identified seven key goal areas. The Strategic Plan includes specific objectives for achieving each of the stated goals. Each objective has a plan of action to enable the completion of the objective and ultimately the goal. It is the intent of the Houston Fire Department to have all personnel, collectively and individually contribute to the accomplishment of these goals. Collectively, with a clear vision we can improve and enhance the services we provide to both our members and the public we have sworn to protect.

GOAL 1.0

Enhance the health and safety of HFD members

GOAL 2.0

Improve fire prevention and public safety awareness

GOAL 3.0

Improve emergency response operations

GOAL 4.0

Strengthen management and leadership skills

GOAL 5.0

Embrace diversity

GOAL 6.0

Ensure capital assets fulfill the needs of the department's personnel and the customer served

GOAL 7.0

Strengthen and reinforce a positive public perception of the department

**GOAL 1.0 ENHANCE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF HFD MEMBERS***Overview*

The preservation of life continues to be the highest priority among fire service providers. The Houston Fire Department recognizes that our ability to protect human lives is greatly impacted by the health and safety of our personnel and their ability to provide adequate services. The Department's highest goal is to provide a safe and healthy work environment for its members. The 2003 NFPA Firefighter Fatalities in the U.S. report indicated 45% of the firefighter fatalities were attributed to heart attacks, 38% internal trauma, and 16% from burns, crushing, or asphyxiation. On-duty deaths were highest among the ages of 40 to 60 years of age. In looking at the type of property involved in firefighter fatalities, residential buildings attributed to the highest percentage at 38% of all 2003 deaths, while mercantile properties attributed to 14%. These are clear indications that mandate a pro-active approach to firefighter fitness and safety. The department seeks to instill and model a common philosophy that promotes firefighter safety and health.

Objective 1.1 Improve overall safety of HFD members through department-wide training, incident briefings and debriefings, and post-incident critiques and analysis.

Plan of Action

- Train all Chief Officers in Chief Officer Development, a class that stresses Injury Cause, Risk versus Benefit analysis, Leadership, Fireground Safety, Strategy and Tactics, and Customer Service in (2) training sessions given semi-annually by August of 2006. This class includes training sessions on the HFD Command Simulator.
- Train all Engineer/Operators, Captains, and Senior Captains in Officer Development, a class that stresses Injury Cause, Risk versus Benefit analysis, Leadership, Fireground Safety, Strategy and Tactics, and Customer Service in (2) training sessions given semi-annually by August of 2006.
- Train 100% of all Chief Officers in National Fire Academy – “Incident Safety Officer Course” by July of 2006.
- Train 100% of all Senior Captains in National Fire Academy – “Incident Safety Officer Course” by July of 2007.
- Ensure that 100% of HFD members receive Operations level training as per NFPA 472 and that each hazardous materials incident be thoroughly briefed prior to operations and reviewed through debriefings, critiques, and a formal post incident analysis.
- Complete HIPAA Policies and Procedure Manual in accordance with the federal mandate and post on the HFD website. The HIPAA Policy is currently under review by the COH Legal Department.
- Schedule HIPAA Training Classes for all employees with anticipated completion by December 2005.
- Employ a Health and Safety Officer by July 2007 that will train all department members in the benefits of good nutrition, physical fitness, and living a healthy lifestyle. This will include obtaining a baseline of blood pressure, resting heart rate, and



weight. Every year these items will be obtained and the member will be made aware of the results. Members will be given advice on how to correct possible problems.

- Track all accidents and near accidents that occur at the Val Jahnke Training Facility. Review all incidents at monthly staff meetings. Review guidelines and amend them to prevent like accidents from occurring. Goal is to reduce accidents by 20% each year.

Objective 1.2 Conduct research and development of all safety related issues and continue to provide high quality personal protective equipment to our members.

Plan of Action

- Purchase and issue all responders turnout gear that is of the same kind and style to ensure compatible protection to all personnel. This is projected for completion by July of 2006.
- Continue research into burn injuries to hands and upgrade firefighting gloves to afford better protection. Prototype gloves will be evaluated in FY 2006.
- By July of 2007, the HFD will convert all attack hand lines to high visibility, orange hose to assist firefighters in locating the hose for egress from a building.
- Convert all Self Contained Breathing Apparatus to 45-minute cylinders in order to allow a higher chance of survival during MAYDAY events. Depending on funding, this project will be phased in over the next five years.
- Issue personal flotation devices for all riding positions on emergency response vehicles within the next two years.
- Equip all emergency response apparatus with a Chem/Bio Kit and radiation detection to provide protection for responders from WMD agents. This project will be completed in by July of 2006.
- Equip all engine companies with thermal imagers by September of 2005.
- Upgrade obsolete computers and monitors (6+ yrs. old) for staff personnel assigned at HEC required to effectively run many of the upgrades and applications currently used at HEC. This will be phased in over the next five years.
- The Val Jahnke Training Facility will track all occurrences of MVAs, injuries, and near-misses within the department. Review all incidents at monthly staff meetings. Review guidelines and amend them to prevent similar events from occurring. Our goal is to reduce those occurrences by 20% per year.

Objective 1.3 Reduce the number of HFD vehicle accidents

Plan of Action

- Train 300 Engineer/Operators per year in safe driving program. The NAPD certification is good for three years. This goal is to reduce apparatus accidents by 30% in 3 years.
- Revise the accident reporting method by July of 2006 to capture better data and allow for a more thorough analysis of vehicle accident statistics.



- Research and employ better emergency lighting and warning devices on all new vehicle purchases.
- Research and pursue the development of a driver-training simulator. If the evaluation indicates the need, funding will be pursued in FY2007.

**GOAL 2.0 IMPROVE FIRE PREVENTION AND PUBLIC SAFETY AWARENESS***Overview*

The absolute best method of reducing fire fatalities and property loss is through fire prevention and public education initiatives. Aggressive development and enforcement of the fire codes and ordinances coupled with thorough fire investigative techniques will greatly reduce the number of accidental fire incidents. The public expects enforcement of the fire codes to provide a safe environment in which to live their lives. Likewise, property must be protected from individuals that commit arson and the associated death, property loss, and fraud produced by this crime. Code enforcement and fire investigation play a minor role in fire prevention when compared to the success of public fire safety education initiatives.

Objective 2.1 Enhance fire safety awareness through and aggressive public education campaign.*Plan of Action*

- The Fire Prevention Life Safety Bureau will conduct Fire Safety Presentations that discuss the facts, figures, new equipment, and safety tips. The stated goal is two presentations per month. Target audiences include schools, civic organizations, businesses, special interest groups, property management groups, etc...
- The Community Outreach Division will seek to involve the media in public safety issues through the use of Public Safety Announcements (PSA), newspaper articles, and web-based technology.
- The Hazardous Materials Response Team (HMRT) will explore opportunities to educate the public and local agencies in the areas of hazardous materials and capabilities of local responders and the HMRT.
- The HMRT will attend all walkthroughs and/or safety meetings requested by businesses involved in the handling of hazardous materials with an emphasis on emergency response planning.
- The HMRT will provide public presentations as requested through the administrative office of the HMRT.
- The Community Outreach Division will seek sponsors and conduct an aggressive smoke detector awareness campaign at least twice a year.
- The Community Outreach Division will develop corporate sponsorships for departmental needs displayed on the HFD website.



Objective 2.2 Set challenging targets for inspection cycles and ensures compliance of existing codes and ordinances.

Plan of Action

- The Fire Prevention Life Safety Bureau High Rise Inspection Team will complete an inspection on all high-rise residential buildings every 24-36 months and non-residential buildings every 48-60 months, with current staffing.
- The Fire Prevention Life Safety Bureau RAGE Team will complete inspections on approximately 900 educational occupancies in the City of Houston annually, in October.
- The Fire Prevention Life Safety Bureau RAGE Team will complete inspections on approximately 80,000 general occupancies in the City of Houston on a seven-year cycle.
- The Fire Prevention Life Safety Bureau RAGE Team will complete inspections on approximately 5,000 assembly occupancies in the City of Houston on a three to five year cycle.
- The Fire Prevention Life Safety Bureau Institutional Team will inspect approximately 105 hospitals, detention facilities, personal care, and nursing homes semi-annually.
- The Fire Prevention Life Safety Bureau Special Operations Team will conduct approximately 1,500 specialized fire and life safety inspections and issue fire marshal's approvals for all occupancies and events not inspected by other teams.
- The Fire Prevention Life Safety Bureau Plan Checking Team will review approximately 6,000 plans per year and review all plans within one day of submission. Upon notification by a contractor, follow-up field inspections will be scheduled within three working days. Complete a comprehensive plan review within 5 days of receiving plans 95% of the time.
- Initiate aboveground tank inspections and plan review of all hazardous material tank farms and aboveground tanks on property where hazardous material operations are performed. Have 25% of known tank farms inspected within a 12-month cycle.
- The Fire Prevention Life Safety Bureau RAGE Team will complete inspections on approximately 5,000 apartment complexes (with 15 units or more) in the City of Houston every two and a half to three years.
- The Fire Prevention Life Safety Bureau High Rise Inspection Team will complete an inspection on all high-rise residential buildings every 24-36 months and non-residential buildings every 48-60 months, with current staffing.
- Maintain current inspection frequency of inspecting a residential building once every three years with a target frequency of once each year.
- Maintain inspection frequency of inspecting an educational occupancy once every year.
- Maintain current inspection frequency until the ILMS becomes available and data gathered during the inspection can be analyzed.
- The Fire & Arson Investigation Division will report any detected trends related to accidental fire causes to the Life Safety Division, so that potentially dangerous trends can be reported on a regional and national level.



- The Fire & Arson Investigation Division will continue to focus on training personnel about new arson detection technologies and attempt to assure that modern equipment is available to all Investigators.
- The Special Operations Team conducts inspections and issues fire marshal's approvals for special occupancies such as the airports, convention centers, professional sports stadiums, haunted houses and dangerous buildings. Also, all special permits such as LP gas use, pyrotechnics, trench burning, festivals, tents and roofing operations are inspected and approved by this team when compliance with the code has been achieved.
- Conduct joint inspections with HPD and other COH departments; participate within the Construction Industry Council; Integrate with the Department of Homeland Security by participating in the "Buffer Zone Protection Plan."
- The HFD will evaluate the effectiveness of the Permit Compliance Group (PCG) in identifying new permit requirements within the City of Houston.

Objective 2.3 Promulgate changes to existing fire codes and ordinances or create new ordinances to effect life safety.

Plan of Action

- Create and pass a local ordinance requiring the installation of fire sprinklers in all commercial high-rise buildings. Target date of completion is January of 2006.
- Create and pass a local ordinance requiring the installation of fire sprinklers in all commercial apartment buildings. Target date of completion is January of 2008.

**GOAL 3.0 IMPROVE EMERGENCY RESPONSE OPERATIONS***Overview*

The core mission of the Houston Fire Department is to provide superior emergency services to the citizens of Houston. Often, the first interaction between the public and the Houston Fire Department occurs during a time of personal tragedy for the requestor. The public sector expects and should receive timely, efficient, and superior professional services from our employees. All opportunities to enhance and improve the services we provide should be explored and implemented. The introduction of new technologies coupled with aggressive training and comprehensive professional development of our employees will allow the Houston Fire Department to achieve this goal.

Objective 3.1 Improve emergency response operations through comprehensive, in-depth training.*Plan of Action*

- The Fire & Arson Investigation Division will continue to focus on training personnel about new arson detection technologies and attempt to assure that modern equipment is available to all Investigators.
- The HFD will fully implement the National Incident Management System by March 2006.
- Train approx. 100 Chief officers and 150 Senior Captains in the Command Simulator to improve decision-making and strategy on the fire ground that will lead to efficient tactics and crew resource management on the fire ground. This will be completed by November of 2005 and repeated quarterly, thereafter.
- Train all Engineer Operators, Captains and Senior Captains in Officer Development class that stresses Injury Cause, Risk versus Benefit analysis, Leadership, Fire ground Safety, Strategy and Tactics, and Customer Service in (2) training sessions given semi-annually by August of 2006.
- Train 100% of all Chief Officers in National Fire Academy – “Incident Safety Officer Course” by July of 2006.
- Train 100% of all Senior Captains in National Fire Academy – “Incident Safety Officer Course” by July of 2007.
- All personnel assigned to the HMRT, TRT, and HMST shall attend mandatory quarterly training classes each year.
- Implement a formal evaluation of newly transferred HMRT members through the use of phase evaluations based on NFPA standards and team guidelines.
- Continue implementation of the Master Plan for upgrading and expanding the infrastructure at the Val Jahnke Training Facility. The plan includes renovation of the burn building and drill tower, designing new training props, and adding new classroom space for approx. 150 students. The renovation of the burn building and drill tower is



currently in progress and tentative completion is November 2005. Overall completion of the plan is scheduled for December 2007.

- Develop new training as required by changing and emerging issues and implement a strategy of completion.

Objective 3.2 Evaluate the Emergency Medical Services delivery system to provide superior EMS.

Plan of Action

- The EMS Division will continue to collect and examine data from all aspects of EMS delivery to determine trends and identify needed changes to the system.
- All paramedics will attend periodic Medical Management Conferences to address specific issues and improve their efficiency.
- Complete the HFD Squad Program by July of 2007.
- Require all current and future applicants to become certified paramedics.
- Implement a Paramedic Engine Program by July of 2008.
- Increase the number of Ambulances by three each year, for a total of 15, over the next five years.
- Implement the use of a Customer Service Satisfaction Survey to evaluate the level of service and delivery of care provided by the HFD EMS.
- Continue the use of the Survivor Reunion program to promote pride and efficiency within the department.

Objective 3.3 Enhance the capability of the HFD to prepare for and respond to events of terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction, including chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosive (CBRNE) devices.

Plan of Action

- All HMRT members shall attend the Center for Domestic Preparedness Live Agent training in Anniston, AL, Emergency Response to Terrorist Bombings in Socorro, NM, and the Advanced WMD Radiological/Nuclear course in Mercury, NV.
- All Houston Medical Strike Team (HMST) members shall attend the Center for Domestic Preparedness Live Agent training in Anniston, AL. by July of 2007.
- The development of Decontamination Task Forces shall be completed by July of 2006.
- All HFD emergency response apparatus will be equipped with Chemical/Biological Kits by July of 2006 to provide responder protection.
- The VJTF will conduct multi-company drills on a monthly basis to maintain proficiency in WMD preparedness.
- The HFD goal is to convert all SCBA to CBRNE Certified by end of FY2010.



- The department will explore opportunities to train and exercise with other response agencies within the Houston urban area (CIMA, Harris County, US Coast Guard, etc...).
- All cadets will receive 16 hours of WMD training as part of their cadet curriculum.

Objective 3.4 Maximize efficient utilization of resources.

Plan of Action

- All response statistics will be analyzed to assess the efficient use of responding units.
- Warehouse and stock inventories will be monitored for adequacy and efficiency on a periodic basis.
- Applicants will be processed in a 66-day time period from Civil Service Test date to conditional job offer.
- Maintain an active Civil Service Exam list with enough applicants to form a class of 50 to 70 cadets.
- ARFF will work out an arrangement with airport security for them to OEC personnel to escort off-airport HFD units to airside EMS and fire incidents. Currently there are delays because off-airport HFD units cannot get through security checkpoints unescorted. Airport personnel are currently not aware of active emergency incidents and thus cannot provide escort.
- Pursue a minimum staffing of at least 2 fire fighters on each ARFF emergency response vehicle. The size, weight, and speed of ARFF trucks coupled with pump and roll operations require a driver and turret operator. Command and control will be improved with the addition of a command aide. Improved command leads to improved fire ground safety. Contingent upon available funding and personnel.
- Continue to evaluate Office of Emergency Communications (OEC) protocols for effectiveness and institute changes to avoid over-utilization of resources.

Objective 3.5 Explore and identify new technologies to increase efficiency.

Plan of Action

- Research and Development will work closely with vendors and manufacturers to identify weaknesses and threats to our response objectives and develop or seek out new methods and technology to increase our effectiveness.
- The Apparatus Design Committee will explore new concepts and designs in vehicles to create a modern fleet of response vehicles.



Objective 3.6 Reduce HFD response times.

Plan of Action

- Increase the percentage of calls processed within one minute or less without compromising accuracy by July of 2007.
- Reduce the turnout time of HFD equipment 10% or more by July of 2006.
- Reduce the overall response time of first arriving HFD equipment to 6 minutes or less by July of 2006.

**GOAL 4.0 STRENGTHEN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS***Overview*

There is a distinct difference between management and leadership. Both are vital to the success of any organization, and because they are, it is critical to understand the difference. Leadership is defined as having the ability or capacity to lead. It focuses on doing the right things. Management focuses on doing things right. In order to secure success in the efforts of the Houston Fire Department's mission, we must cultivate and educate leaders from within our organization. It is important to mention that leadership is not rank, title, privileges, or money. It is responsibility. All members of this organization should be encouraged to embrace their responsibilities to the City, this department, its members and the citizens we serve.

Effective management, doing things right, will only come through comprehensive training and education of our employees. All members of the Houston Fire Department must accept responsibility for the development of this organization and be encouraged to "do the right things right".

Objective 4.1 Promote excellence within the Houston Fire Department and foster pride in our organization from the members, community leaders, and the citizens we serve.

Plan of Action

- The department will establish and maintain a professional appearance at all times.
- Members will be encouraged to nominate others for recognition and awards for superior acts of service. Members will receive formal recognition each year at the Valor Awards Ceremony.
- All Special Operations Groups will conduct Quarterly Management Reviews with their Assistant Chief.
- Chief Officers meeting will be held quarterly to address current issues and reinforce the expectations of management.
- EMS will conduct periodic Medical Management Conferences to address current issues and reinforce the expectations of management.
- EMS will continue the Patient Reunion Program to foster pride in service.
- The HFD will conduct two Promotion Ceremonies each year to recognize those individuals who have excelled through promotion opportunities.
- The HFD will expand the Valor Awards program to formally recognize individuals who have exceeded the expectations of the department and community.

***Objective 4.2 Improve relations between management and labor groups******Plan of Action***

- Continue to utilize the Joint Labor and Management Safety Committee. This committee meets bi-monthly to discuss safety and management issues. Recommendations are made to the Fire Chief for resolution.
- The HFD Command Staff will extend opportunities for a representative from Local 341 to attend the Command Staff Meetings at least once a quarter.
- The Fire Chief and Command Staff will hold meetings with representatives of all labor groups at least twice each year to discuss related issues.

Objective 4.3 Improve personal accountability for member's actions.***Plan of Action***

- The HFD will review and update the HFD Behavior and Discipline Manual to ensure fair and consistent discipline to all members. This will be completed by December of 2005.
- The department will pursue through collective bargaining and state legislature the addition of an Alternative Dispute Resolution program that will allow members an avenue to settle disputes and complaints through the use of mediation. This program will be instituted by January of 2006.
- The department will set clear guidelines and direction as to expectations each member will be accountable for.
- Chief Officers meeting will be held quarterly to address current issues and reinforce the expectations of management.
- Train newly hired fire fighter cadets in accountability for actions, customer service, and always "Do what is right". This will start with the Trainee Creed. The Trainee Creed cites "doing the right thing always, respect for others, and always doing my best".
- All staff at the VJTF is required to know the "VJTF Code of Ethics" and practice it everyday.

Objective 4.4 Provide leadership and management training to all members.***Plan of Action***

- Expand the Officer Overview Program at OEC to include Radio Operators and CSO's by upgrading knowledge assessments to include operational management criteria (i.e. tactical radio assignments, incident data via MDC, back-in procedures, emergency call processing, etc.).
- Train all Engineer Operators, Captains and Senior Captains, and Chief Officers in Officer Development class that stresses Injury Cause, Risk versus Benefit analysis,



Leadership, Fire Ground Safety, Strategy and Tactics, and Customer Service in (2) training sessions given semi-annually by August of 2006.

- Implement Phase III of the Officer Development Program, which will train all Chief Officers in management and organizational skills. This program will be completed by August of 2007.

Objective 4.5 Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the collection and use of data, records, and information systems.

Plan of Action

- The department will establish a Statistics Office within Logistics Command to collect and analyze data for trends and efficiency. Projected date of completion is July of 2006.
- The OEC Officer Overview Program was instituted in 2005 that provided our Senior Officers a training forum allowing them to increase the proficiency levels required due to the constant evolution of the new CAD system at HEC. One hundred percent (100%) of our Senior Officers have completed these assessments. It is expected that one hundred percent (100%) of our Radio Operators and CSO's will have completed these assessments in 2006.
- Ongoing Officer Development classes are being provided at the E. B. Cape Center to enhance their job performance skills.
- Establish a mentoring program to prepare senior officers for upper level management positions.
- The department will periodically review the Information Management Systems for efficiency and effectiveness and institute changes as needed.
- The department will implement the use of Telestaff by July of 2006. This electronic program will increase efficiency in payroll, personnel assignment, and staffing of the department's human resources. Telestaff will also provide a Management Information System for HFD.
- The department will post and fill two positions to provide internal Information and Technology support to the HFD. These positions will be created by July of 2006.

**GOAL 5.0 EMBRACE DIVERSITY***Overview*

The management and members of the Houston Fire Department are keenly aware of the importance of creating a winning, balanced workplace in which people of all cultures and backgrounds have an opportunity to succeed. We recognize that diversity creates many opportunities and benefits because it includes all ethnicities, cultures, genders, religious beliefs, lifestyles, and physical challenges. The Houston Fire Department will continue to work toward encouraging all members to embrace and accept the differences within the department, as well as those within the community we serve.

Objective 5.1 Improve workforce diversity through strong recruiting initiatives.*Plan of Action*

- Extend career day outings to churches and specialty groups targeting minority segments of the community.
- The HFD Recruiting Division will develop a written strategy to reach out and educate minority communities about career opportunities in fire and pre-hospital emergency medical services. Projected date of completion is January 2006.
- The HFD Recruiting Division will work closely with Community Outreach to develop a media strategy for recruiting minority applicants.
- The HFD Recruiting Division will conduct 20 recruitment outings in FY2006.
- Train the current recruiting staff through seminars budgeted for in FY2006.
- Annually review, monitor, and update, our current Recruiting Guidelines, background investigation process, and polygraph process to guard against adverse impacts on minority applicants.
- Partner with Houston Worksource to assist inner city youth to become certified fire fighters.

Objective 5.2 Create an atmosphere of respect for individual differences and promote the strengths associated within.*Plan of Action*

- Training Administrator will ensure training for all members of the Houston Fire Department in Cultural Diversity and Sexual Harassment issues annually. This will take approx 8 months per year.
- The department will aggressively enforce its “Zero Tolerance” rule concerning harassment and discrimination. Members will be held strictly accountable for all actions, which reflect poorly upon the Houston Fire Department and it’s members.



- The department will review all guidelines and processes to guard against and eliminate barriers to a diverse workforce. Each HFD Command shall be responsible for ensuring that members have access to written guidelines and procedures.
- The Logistics Command will coordinate the hiring of a consultant whose specialty is diversity management. Phase I of the consultant's proposal includes the use of interdepartmental focus groups. Each focus group will be brought together in a non-HFD location, by ethnicity, to discuss cultural differences and ways to effectively interact. The focus groups should be as follows:
 - 3 groups of African-American Firefighters, 15 per group
 - 3 groups of Caucasian Firefighters, 15 per group
 - 3 groups of Hispanic Firefighters, 15 per group
 - 1 group of Asians and Pacific Islanders, 28 total members
 - 3 groups of female firefighters, 30+ per group (105 total members)
 - 2 groups of non-classified personnel, 20 per group
 - Combined groups at the completion of separate discussions
- In Phase I, prior to beginning the Focus Groups, the consultant will visit with and discuss the project individually with:
 - The Fire Chief
 - Mayor's Chief of Staff
 - Select City Council Members
 - Special Interest Group Leaders
 - A Chief's House (to be determined)
 - HFD's current Diversity Training Administrator
- Phase I may be completed in approximately 40 to 50 hours. Focus groups are tentatively planned for 1.5 hours each, four groups per day
- Phase II will include findings and recommendations

**GOAL 6.0 ENSURE CAPITAL ASSETS FULFILL THE NEEDS OF THE DEPARTMENT'S PERSONNEL AND THE CUSTOMER SERVED.***Overview*

It is vital to the success of the Houston Fire Department to provide adequate funding to support the mission. We must create a budget plan that reflects the vision of the department and supports the activities necessary to achieve its mission and goals. Not only is it important to create an adequate budget process, it is vital to create systems to address preventative maintenance of assets and ensure sufficient operating supplies. All employees must endeavor to utilize department assets efficiently and effectively while avoiding unnecessary financial impacts.

Objective 6.1 Prepare a Five-Year Budget Plan that accurately reflects the department's funding requirements.*Plan of Action*

- All Divisions and Commands will be required to annually conduct a needs assessment and identify funding requirements for their respective areas. Annual budgets will be presented to the Fire Chief in January of each year. Funding needs will be projected five years in advance.
- The department will develop an apparatus and equipment acquisition and replacement plan that meets the needs of the members and community.
- The Finance and Administration Command will conduct periodic budget performance audits and report their findings to the affected commands.
- The HFD will document the consequences of not funding financial requests of the Annual Budget.

Objective 6.2 Personnel*Plan of Action*

- The Human Resource Division will closely monitor personnel staffing needs and conduct a staffing needs analysis annually.
- The Finance and Administration Command will make the necessary budget requests and adjustments to meet the staffing needs of the HFD.
- The Risk Management Division will conduct periodic audits of leave usage and recommend changes needed to meet the personnel requirements of the department.

***Objective 6.3 Supplies and Equipment******Plan of Action***

- The Planning and Research Division will continue to identify and conduct research of new technologies that may improve the safety and efficiency of the department.
- The Supply Depot and Quartermaster will conduct periodic audits to ensure adequate supplies are maintained to effect continuous operations.
- The Fleet Management Division will conduct periodic audits to ensure adequate parts inventories are maintained to provide a well equipped and maintained fleet of vehicles. Fleet will lower the dollar amount of current parts inventories by 20% in FY2007.
- On May 15, 2005, the Communications Management Division, in cooperation with the HEC, began conducting weekly communication systems testing. These tests identify system anomalies and provide the technical staff with a blueprint for system diagnostics and corrective maintenance. These system tests will continue weekly.

Objective 6.4 Increase Department Revenues***Plan of Action***

- The department will increase the collection rate for EMS invoices by 2% for each of the next five years.
- The Fire Prevention Division will increase permit revenues by 20% each year for the next five years.
- The Val Jahnke Training Facility will seek funding through grants and partnerships to fund improvements to the VJTF. The goal is to receive approximately \$35 million by December of 2009.
- The department will continue to seek alternative funding through the pursuance of grants such as U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Assistance to Firefighters, and the Urban Area Security Initiatives.
- The Community Outreach Division will pursue funding of public education through corporate partnerships and private donations.
- The Val Jahnke Training Facility will pursue additional revenue through cooperative fees for the use of its facilities and services.
- The department will conduct a cost/benefit analysis of all Mutual Aid Contracts to ensure a fair and equitable cost of services is recovered through the contract period.

**GOAL 7.0 STRENGTHEN AND REINFORCE A POSITIVE PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE DEPARTMENT***Overview*

Perception is everything. If our members and external customers perceive that HFD is well managed and provides superior services, then that is true. An opposite perception of poor management and substandard service is also true. Perceptions are the precursors to attitudes. The Houston Fire Department must have a plan to develop positive perceptions from our members and the people we serve. HFD must pay special attention to our relationship with the media. The media can solidify our standing in the community or destroy the confidence of citizens in the department. There must be a comprehensive plan to maximize positive publicity and reduce negative stories. The primary means of accomplishing this goal is through service excellence. The department must pursue opportunities to showcase the achievements of the department to our members and the public. This not only provides morale enhancements, but it also details the value of an effective fire department pursuing excellence in public safety. The public will support a public sector agency if they believe that superior service is being provided with their tax contributions.

Objective 7.1 Promote international recognition of the HFD from our peers and the public through superior service and accreditation.*Plan of Action*

- The department will seek accreditation through the Commission on Fire Accreditation International in September of 2005.
- The department will conduct an annual assessment in January of each year to maintain accreditation through the CAFI.
- Members of the department will be encouraged to present topics and training at various national conferences.

Objective 7.2 Maintain an ISO Rating of One*Plan of Action*

- The department will conduct a review of the ISO requirements in March of each year and implement action plans to maintain an ISO rating of 1.



Objective 7.3 Implement a proactive public information system to provide timely, accurate, and positive information to the community.

Plan of Action

- The Community Outreach Division will create and maintain the HFD website to promote new interests in the department and provide positive, around-the-clock news about the Houston Fire Department.
- The Public Information Officers will respond to all multiple alarm and high profile events to provide an immediate response to media requests.
- The Community Outreach Division will attempt to generate a press release of a positive nature at least once a month.
- All Commands and Divisions will seek out opportunities to interact with the public and community on a regular basis. Station visits and public speaking engagements will be coordinated through the Public Information Office.
- The Houston Fire Department will be the featured presentation for the October PIP meetings each year with a focus on superior public service.
- The Fire & Arson Investigation Division will continue to focus on interagency activity with federal and local law enforcement agencies and continue our efforts to present arson prevention and related programs to schools and community groups.
- Continue the Annual Fire Muster each year in October where the public is invited to visit the Fire Academy. At this event the community can interact with firefighters in a non-emergency, fun filled atmosphere. Firefighters meet and greet citizens, show off their skills and apparatus in exhibitions of rescue, EMS scenarios, and fire fighting evolutions.
- Promote and continue the Citizen's Fire Academy. The department will seek to enroll a minimum of 20 individuals in the Citizen's Fire Academy three times annually.
- The department, through the Hazardous Materials Response Team, will host the HotZone Conference in October of each year. This conference provides timely, instructional information on various responder topics.

Objective 7.4 Build on new and long-standing relationships with public officials and agencies at the local, state, and national levels.

Plan of Action

- The HFD will seek out opportunities to participate in the National Fire Protection Association's standard making process through participation on NFPA committees.
- The HFD will continue to utilize the Ride-Along Program to foster relationships with other agencies and responders from around the world.
- ARFF will initiate interagency dialogue with HPD, Customs and Border Patrol, FBI, Health Department, Airport Operations, Airport Public Safety, and others to discuss response to WMD and communicable disease incidents in preparation for IAH designation as a CDC Quarantine Station.



- Continue to interact with public officials through meetings, seminars, presentations, and unified training.
- The Houston Fire department will maintain its membership with the Channel Industries Mutual Aid (CIMA) organization through the Hazardous Materials Response Team.
- The HFD will be an active participant in emergency planning and response on various regional committees, such as the Marine Security Task Force, the Houston Urban Area Security Initiative, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, and the Texas Task Force One Advisory Council.
- The Fire Prevention Life Safety Division will continue to foster a cooperative interaction with community groups such as BOMA, Houston Apartment Association, CIC Construction Industry Council and the Houston High-Rise Triad.
- The Houston Fire Department will partner with Harris County to complete the development of the Citizen Emergency Response Teams (CERT).
- The Houston Fire Department will partner with FEMA and EPA to host the HotZone Conference in October of each year.

**STRATEGIC PLAN MANAGEMENT**

In November of 1999, the Houston Fire Department completed and published the first Strategic Plan. That plan was a culmination of efforts from all areas of the department. In December of 2004, the HFD Command Staff began the arduous task of revising and modifying the FY 2001-2005 HFD Strategic Plan.

Leaders from all commands were employed to present new goals and objectives to reflect the vision of the department and offer guidance into the future. After many months of effort, the Houston Fire Department Strategic Plan for FY 2006-2011 was ready for publication. New goals, objectives, and plans of action have been formulated into a comprehensive document. The plan has been presented to the Mayor and Council and will be distributed to all Commands and Divisions within the department. Additionally, it will be posted on the HFD website for all to share.

As with any plan, it is of little use unless periodically examined for its effectiveness. Each Command will review the Strategic Plan for applicability of the objectives, progress on the plans of action, and needed revisions. Each Command is responsible for developing its own method or procedure to monitor and measure its progress as compared to the Strategic Plan. These reviews should be conducted quarterly, with one of those reviews occurring in December, prior to the development of the next fiscal year's budget. It is imperative that strategic plan goals and objectives are considered and incorporated into funding requests of each year's budget, so that plans of action can be accomplished. The final review in August of each year, after the adoption of the annual budget, will serve as a platform for formal revision of the plan and will aid in future fiscal forecasting.

This Strategic Planning Process will allow the Houston Fire Department to safely, effectively, and efficiently progress into the future. It is the vision of the Houston Fire Department to provide a superior emergency service organization, which continually improves the quality of service delivered to our customers, the citizens of Houston.